



THAILAND STATE ALUMNI COMMUNITY E-NEWSLETTER

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Happy New Year 2012



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'State Alumni' are current and former participants of U.S. government-sponsored exchange, teaching or professional programs.

Join alumni.state.gov to stay in touch with fellow alumni, and with the U.S. Embassy in Bangkok and U.S. Consulate in Chiang Mai, so that your exchange experience does not stop when you return home, but continues to result in productive professional, societal, cultural, and community engagements.



Alumni Show Why Leadership Matters

On October 18-22, 2011, a group of State Alumni joined the [Brighter Thailand](#) leadership team to organize the Global Youth Leadership Camp in Chiang Khan, Loei. More than 30 students from local schools participated in this five-day event filled with leadership and team building activities, including knowledge sharing, group projects, games, singing and dancing activities, and quizzes. This project gave these disadvantaged students an opportunity to open their minds and learn about core values of good leadership such as responsibility and perseverance.



U.S. Ambassador Meets State Alumni in Trip to Hat Yai

On November 21, U.S. Ambassador to Thailand Kristie Kenney made a one-day visit to Hat Yai, marking the first Ambassadorial trip to Thailand's deep south in many years. Among many activities, the Ambassador hosted a lunch reception for regional Mission contacts which included Fulbright, YES, SEAYLP and IVLP alumni. The event was capped off with a graduation ceremony for 15 excited Access Microscholarship English language students, who had driven 3 hours from Yala to receive their certificates from the Ambassador.





Alumni Share First-Hand Experience with Muslim Youth

On December 3, 2011, five Youth Exchange and Study program (YES) alumni shared their experiences with 40 student finalists attending the AFS-YES Selection Camp 2011 in Nonthaburi. This group of students, who are competing for 15 spots to study in U.S. high schools next year, were welcomed by alumni and given useful information about the United States. YES alumni showcased various aspects of life in America, including host families, schools, friends, activities and the value of community service. Alumni also led some of the ice-breaking activities and served as judges on the selection committees.



Alumni Lend a Hand to Help Thailand Flood Victims

On December 7, 2011, a group of Access Microscholarship Program Alumni teamed up to help pack food, water and relief supplies for flood victims at the Thai Red Cross Society in Bangkok. These supplies will be distributed daily to those still in need in Bangkok and surrounding provinces. Embassy Bangkok is immensely proud of our State Alumni who continually band together to make a difference in Thailand.



YES Alumni Attend their Annual Conference

On December 17, 2011, nineteen Youth Exchange and Study Thailand Alumni (YESTA) attended a YES alumni conference in Nonthaburi. Besides sharing their experiences in the U.S. with one another, this fifth class of YES alumni each gave presentations about community service projects they have participated in since their return from the U.S. early this year. Alumni presented a variety of activities that they have done, including fundraising and volunteering for Thailand flood victims, setting up English camps, sharing their experiences with other students and organizing environmental projects in their communities. On the next day, this group of alumni also got together to donate blood at the Thai Red Cross Society.



GLOBAL STATE ALUMNI MEMBER OF THE MONTH

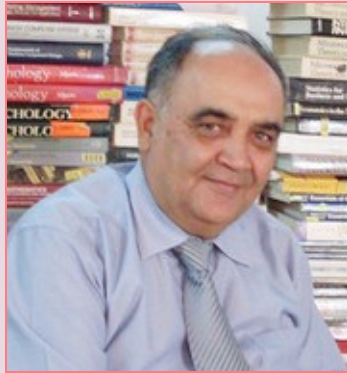


Svetlana Semenovkh
October 2011

Svetlana Semenovkh of Russia participated in an [International Visitor Leadership Program \(IVLP\)](#) on English language curriculum development in 2007. She is a passionate educator, who, as a result of her exchange program, incorporates American studies and culture into English language curriculum. Hailing from Birobidzhan, the capital city of the Jewish Autonomous Oblast in the Russian Far East, Semenovkh takes every opportunity to share her knowledge and skills with other teachers and utilizes her exchange experience to enhance English language education and leadership development for students across the region.

In Semenovkh's own words, "the participation in the exchange International Visitor Leadership Program has expanded my knowledge of the U.S. culture, education and politics thus allowing me to promote understanding between our nations through various educational programs and projects for teachers and schoolchildren."

[***Read More***](#)



Dr. Ayubjon Yusupov
November 2011

Dr. Ayubjon Yusupov, from Tajikistan, was selected as the U.S. Department of State's Alumni Member of the Month for November 2011 in recognition of his efforts in support of Tajikistani youth mentoring and scholarship programs. Dr. Yusupov participated in the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs' Regional Scholars Exchange Program with Pittsburg State University in 2002.

While in the U.S. he worked with university partners to develop an innovative economics curriculum for Tajik State University of Commerce (TSUC) where he has since become the vice-director of the Institute of Economy and Trade. As a result of his exchange experience students at his university now complete a series of dynamic economics courses in the English language, providing them with the tools to engage cooperatively with the United States and other countries over the course of their lives.

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Nathan Collett
December 2011

Nathan Collett was selected as the [U.S. Department of State's](#) Alumni Member of the month for December 2011 in recognition of his commitment to urban Kenyan youth. In 2006, he was awarded a [Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs'](#) (ECA) [Fulbright U.S. Student Grant](#) to research African storytelling in Nairobi, Kenya. As a result of his exchange experience, he established a film school in Kenya, started a foundation in conjunction with his existing film studio, and tapped into new media to help people understand the world of urban African communities through storytelling.

According to Nathan, "having the opportunity to be a Fulbright fellow inspired a life-long commitment to telling stories from other cultures and [effecting] social transformation through the power of film and media."

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MEET THE ALUMNI

How remarkable it was to be a part of SUSI. SUSI is the Study of The United Institute for Leadership Students on Global Environmental Issues. This program does not provide the students only the tuition, facility and knowledge; but also the memorable experiences that are not easily found in routine life. To me, being a SUSI 2011 participant is my great honor. I had the opportunity to share my experience with other Southeast Asian students in this SUSI family. We had a chance to visit many important places in the USA. We did many challenging yet warm and wonderful activities, which include environmental campaigns, panel discussion with the government and native people.

In Hawai'i, the first place that SUSI family visited, we stayed at Oahu Island. This was the place where I gained new knowledge related to Hawai'i's natural resources; and was encouraged to learn new aspects of life through many beneficial activities, such as observing windmills farm producing electricity, making a solution gallery on Hawai'i environmental issues. Moreover, we also able to demonstrate our abilities in trying to achieve and maintain unity in group and leadership through team canoeing, rope course activity and snorkeling. We were implanted with the environmental awareness in order to be green citizens. We did not use any plastic bags and supportively used individual bottles of water everywhere we went to. Hawai'i has changed my attitudes toward the environment since we picked up the environmental issues by showing the ideas through solution gallery. Fortunately, I met Ms. Maya Soetoro-Ng, Barack Obama's sister. She was a chairman in Eco-schools conference that we attended and I could see how intelligent she was. In addition, I think Hawai'i should be the best place for multi-ethnicity as the land of all races of people living together peacefully, which I really felt during my stay in Hawai'i. In the mainland, San Francisco was the next place where we

spent four days. I was really impressed with the urbanization. The city was well-built. The scenery around the city was beautiful and clean, with no visible garbage. It was the place where the effect of environmental movement was obvious. There was a successful project concerning waste management called "Zero Waste", organized by "Zierra Club" and requiring citizen voluntary. Moreover, the transportation in San Francisco was well-

organized. There were cable buses and cable trains all around the city, which cause less traffic jam. After that we moved on to the heart of central part of the mainland, Boulder in Colorado. We stayed at the University of Colorado at Boulder. It was the mountainous state enriched with the beauty of nature: mountain, forest, creek and even snow. We did very exciting rock climbing and rafting in Arkansas River, meanwhile we studied natural physical geography as well. In Boulder, people were very nice; all of them had environmental awareness. The most impressive part here for me was that this city "goes green". Bicycles were seriously encouraged to use around the city. There were bicycle stations run by automatic system. We could take the bicycles by paying credit-cards, bringing them from the station and returning them to another station easily. I noticed that there were a few cars in this city. In Boulder, organic products without chemical were supported for consumption. The big well-known organic supermarket here was "Alfafa's", where the entrepreneur directly buys raw materials from the farmers. This place exactly was my favorite one.

Lastly, we headed to Washington D.C. In this capital city, we visited many official places; for example, "Senate office of Republican" and "Office of States Representative". Both are places we intensively shared our ex-

periences. We also discussed about the problems and resolutions. We found that people there were generous and open-minded to listen to our thoughts about pros and cons in our point of views. In summary, this program has provided me with the most memorable experience in life. Thanks to SUSI, I was able to see the other side of our world. My vision and views upon the world and its environment have been broadened. Now, I am putting my effort in developing myself to be an environmental leader. The key idea which I got from SUSI was that I think my country actually has the natural resources, raw materials and productive area for agriculture like other places. We only need to organize those resources wisely and sustainably.

SUPISAN FUKFON
SUSI Alumnus 2011
Student, Faculty of Education
Chulalongkorn University



Ambassadors for Development

East Asia and Pacific Regional Alumni Association Enrichment Conference

From October 8-10, 2011, Mr. Yutthakrit Chalermthai, Thailand YES Alumni President, had an opportunity to participate in the "Ambassadors for Development", East Asia and Pacific Regional Alumni Association Enrichment Conference in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia. Each day the conference had its own theme, including Alumni Association Development and Best Practices, Youth Alumni Engagement and Regional Networking, and Regional Collaboration on Global Issues. The event was a great opportunity for him to meet other outstanding State Alumni from different countries in the region and to benefit from participating in several interesting sessions. At this conference, Mr. Yutthakrit was assigned to give a presentation on the topic "YESTA Club (Youth Exchange and Study Thailand Alumni)." He explained how to engage youth alumni and also gave some tips on how alumni can get involved in the development of their own organization. Another

assignment that he was given was to set up a working group to manage different challenging topics such as Global Health and Education, Democracy and Human Rights and Youth Alumni Leadership and Engagement. After his presentation, his group, "A G A I N" (Alumni en-GAgement In Nations), won \$2000 award from the U.S. Embassy in Ulaanbaatar to do their proposed projects in nine countries.



A Comfy Place to Work and Play

Good news! The newly remodeled **Information Resource Center (IRC)**, a specialized reference and research facility that aims to provide the Thai public with free, comprehensive, and authoritative information on the United States, is now open for your use!

Staffed by information professionals and reference specialists, the IRC is equipped with modern information technologies, including **high-speed WiFi**, **iPads**, and **Kindle e-book readers**. We have a great collection of English-language reference and general **books**, **audiobooks**, and **e-books**, plus **almost 100 magazines** on all subjects. Easy access to **unique commercial databases** provides full texts of thousands of publications on contemporary issues and American society. In addition, a **wide screen TV** with access to selected **English-language news channels** including CNN and VOA, is readily available in the reading room for pleasure viewing. Also available for your viewing pleasure are more than 100 **movies**, **television series** and **documentaries**. If you just want to have fun, we have several **popular board games** for you to kill time and boost your physical and intellectual skills. If you're a regular, you may even get a complimentary cup of hot coffee!

The IRC also offers **trainings on infor-**



mation literacy, particularly online information search techniques and information evaluation and ethics. We also host occasional movie shows followed by discussions with American staff.

Oh, did we mention that our services and products are virtually free?

Conveniently located on the **9th floor of the GPF Building on Witthayu Road**, within walking distance of BTS Ploenchit Station, the IRC is an ideal place for research as well as educational and cultural programs. The reading room, with 20-person capability, has study tables as well as lounge chairs and bean bags for leisure reading and movie viewing. An adjacent program room easily accommodates 150 persons. Limited free parking is available.

The IRC is open weekdays from 8 am – 5 pm, except Embassy holidays.

It would be a pleasure to welcome you and your friends! Simply walk in or call Ployping Siripakdee at 02-205-4113, email irc@state.gov.

See you soon!



**INFORMATION
RESOURCE
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Email: irc@state.gov

Website:

<http://bangkok.usembassy.gov>

Phone: 02-205-4113 **Fax:** 02-650-8918

Hour:

Mondays-Fridays: 8:00-17:00 hrs
except U.S. Embassy holidays

UPDATE YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION

For State Alumni who have new contact information, please fill out details on the following link.

http://bangkok.usembassy.gov/alumni_signup.html

Other options to communicate with us:

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Mobile: 081-813-0704

Fax: 02-650-8921

E-mail: Adisorn@state.gov

<http://bangkok.usembassy.gov/alumni.html>



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